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## Viewing cable 07OSLO1099, PAKISTANI NORWEGIANS RIPE FOR RADICALIZATION?

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07OSLO1099**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07OSLO1099	2007-11-08 15:28	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Oslo

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.aftenposten.no/spesial/wikileaksdokumenter/article4025290.ece>

VZCZCXYZ0011  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNY #1099/01 3121528  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 081528Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6422  
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0614  
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 2379  
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 7953  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0450  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1490  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 3224  
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 001099

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2017

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [KPAQ](#) [PK](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: PAKISTANI NORWEGIANS RIPE FOR RADICALIZATION?

REF: A. A: OSLO 993

[1](#)B. B: 2006 OSLO 1451

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs Kevin M. Johnson for reasons 1.4 b and d

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 23.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Norway is increasingly a land of immigrants, with over twenty three percent of the capital city,s population now designated as

No Longer Homogeneous: Facts on the Ground  
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[1](#)3. (U) Immigrants compose 8.4 percent of Norway,s total population but are concentrated primarily in Oslo and other urban areas. In Oslo, the immigrant population is 23 % of the population, with 19% of the population coming from non-western countries. Drammen, a city only about a half hours drive from Oslo, has the next biggest percentage of immigrants with 17.5% of its population non-native Norwegian. Pakistani-Norwegians compose 7% of the total immigrant population.

[1](#)4. (U) First and second generation immigrants from Pakistan represent the largest non-western immigrant population in Norway at nearly 30,000 people, Iraqis are in second with 20,000 followed by 18,000 Somalis. Other significant non-western groups include 18,000 Vietnamese, 15,000 Bosnians, 14,000 Iranians, 14,000 Turks (statistics do not show what percentage of this number are Kurds) and 12,500 Sri Lankans. European immigrants are also numerous with Swedes 24,000, Danes 19,000 and Poles (officially 12,000 immigrants but unofficially 100,000 Poles working in Norway at any one time) forming the largest groups.

The Pakistani-Norwegian Community....  
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[1](#)5. (U) Pakistanis came to Norway through a pipeline of connections that started with mass immigrant labor arriving in Norway during the late 60s and early 70s. The majority still have strong family connections in Punjab, specifically in &Little Norway8--a community of repatriated Pakistani-Norwegians--in Kharian, an area of the Hindustan in Punjab province.

....Long Established, but not Integrated  
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[1](#)6. (SBU) Of first generation Pakistani immigrants, 38 percent have been living in Norway for more than 20 years. This is in stark contrast to the recent wave of other immigration from Muslim countries such as Iraq and Somalia, which has been much more recent and mostly through asylum-seekers, not as imported labor. Despite their long stay in Norway, the Pakistani population statistically is the most homogenous, with about 95% of all marriages in this community in the last

ten years being with other Pakistanis, and as many as 75% of those marital partners coming from directly from Pakistan. Net immigration continues to add about 1,000 new members to the Pakistani population a year, mostly through marriage, many of which are arranged and a number of which are forced. Arranged marriages remain a hot topic in Norwegian society; government proposals to raise the age limit for marriage aim at discouraging arranged or forced marriages.

.....and Lagging in Education and Employment

17. (SBU) The situation for Pakistani immigrants in Norway, despite the long history of the community in Norway, is worse than many other immigrant groups. According to the most recent statistics, only 10.5% of the community had a university or college education, which is a third of the national average and still only a half of the average for all non-western immigrant groups (21.3%). Although these numbers are better for the so-called second generation, immigrants born in Norway, it is still significantly below the national average for immigrants. The same is true for work experience. According to the latest statistics the percentage of the Pakistani-Norwegian population that was working was at 38%, compared to 60% as the national average and 40.7% for Asian immigrants in general. Only a little over a quarter of the women were working, in part because of the larger family size and tendency for many of the Pakistani women to immigrate as adult marital partners without any Norwegian language skills or significant educational background. (The Norwegian government has tightened immigration rules and all immigrants will be required to take Norwegian language courses). The average salary is lower among Pakistani families compared to immigrants in general (including Swedes and Danes) as well as compared to Asian/African/Turkish immigrants, which is a more telling statistic. Pakistani Norwegians complain that the Norwegian job market is closed to them, forcing many of them to take up poorly paid service positions (taxi drivers, for example) or to work at Pakistani-owned businesses where the salaries are lower and the opportunity for advancement is limited. This fact likely accounts for the low employment rates among Pakistani women, who are not hired by Pakistani businesses.

18. (SBU) At any given time, 3-4,000 Pakistanis with Norwegian citizenship are living in Pakistan. Many of these are children attending school. It is a common occurrence to send children to school in Pakistan until they are in their teens. Certainly this disenfranchises them from Norwegian society when it comes to educational and professional opportunities. At one point, an attempt was made to get funding for a state-supported Norwegian school in the Little Norway, district of Pakistan to help these children learn Norwegian at an early age, but the government denied the funding request.

Fanaticism ) Officials Downplay Risk...

19. (SBU) The frustrations that non-western immigrants face in being accepted and integrated in Norway may offer a stimulus to fanaticism. However, both the Norwegian authorities, including security officials, and leaders in the Pakistani community publicly and privately downplay the risk of radicalization. The official police (PST) threat evaluation for 2007 states that international terror organizations are not a direct threat against Norway. It also states that there is no indication of radicalization among Islamic residents in Norway although the report acknowledges that the radicalization process can change quite quickly. The police view outside individuals, not residents, as presenting the greatest threat of radicalization.

...but Risks are There

110. (C) Pakistani community leaders downplay the risk of fanaticism despite clear indications that the Norwegian Pakistani population is having difficulties in assimilating and apparent conflict between Pakistani culture and Norwegian mores. The Secretary General of the Islamic Council in Norway specifically told visiting Farah Pandith that Imams have turned away anyone who tries to radicalize their mosque, and he assessed the risk as very low. (See reftel A) It is difficult to judge the reliability of these assessments, especially as Norway remains the home of Mullah Krekar and his Al-Qaeda supportive blog dorbeen.com. While these positive statements may reflect the current reality, there are several indicators that developments in the Pakistani community show that a population at risk. The first is the arrest of Arfan Bhatti, who is on trial for allegedly planning attacks against the U.S. and Israeli embassies in the summer of 2006. The second is the reaction in Norway to the release of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad with a bomb in his turban, the so-called caricature controversy,. The third is the growing radicalization among younger Pakistani Norwegians, possibly stemming from the lack of opportunities for the future.

Gangs: A Potential Facilitator for Radicals

111. (C) Bhatti, a product of the strong gang culture prevalent among Pakistani Norwegian youth, is an example of what may await Norwegian authorities in the years ahead as members of second generation Pakistani Norwegians gravitate to criminal activity which may lead to terrorism. The Pakistani-Norwegians constitute the leadership and main membership in both the A-gang, (and related Young guns, group) and the B-gang,. The gangs have had a running conflict since the 1980s which culminated in a mid-day inter-gang shooting on Oslo,s popular boardwalk Akerbrygge last summer. The attraction of these gangs is significant, as they offer a way to fast money, fast cars, and peer respect to Pakistani youth. Bhatti became the youngest ever member of the Young guns, at age 13 and may be considered a hero by Pakistani youth.

112. (C) In 2006 the police admitted a hesitance to confront gang members or to curtail their activities because they felt outgunned. Some police sources have told the embassy that the Oslo Police limit their patrols of largely Muslim East Oslo. The Akerbrygge shooting was a public relations disaster for the police and they recently have begun efforts to crack down on the gangs. Over the last year this has led

in part to the further evidence of the largest tax fraud scheme in Norway,s history, involving the gangs and Oslo,s taxi drivers, many of whom are Pakistani and operated as getaway drivers for gang activities using their taxis. Police investigatons also led to the discovery of a huge money laundering scheme involving real estate and other assets in Brazil. Gangs will continue to represent an attractive option to Pakistani youth as long as the feeling of disenfranchisement lingers in the community and they remain outside of the working world and higher education community. Comments from high school students to Farah Pandith during her visit, and information from NGOs such as Youth Against Violence reflect the growing sense of frustration among Pakistani youth who see no future for themselves in Norway due to lack of opportunities and perceived discrimination.

#### The Cartoon Controversy and Leadership Struggles in the Pakistani Community

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¶13. (C) In the cartoon controversy,, images depicting Muhammad as a violent figure led to eventual mass protests in Norway in 2006. Although the images were initially released in a Danish paper, they were reprinted in Norway and led to significant unrest in the local Islamic population, as well as to a surprisingly muted reaction from Norwegian authorities and social commentators on the right of free speech. Large demonstrations in Norway remonstrating against the insult to Islam were accompanied by less-public death threats against the Norwegian publisher of the image, who owns a Christian publication called Magazinet, and who was later blamed by the Norwegian government for having partial responsibility for the attacks on Norwegian interests overseas. These death threats, while not directly attributable to Pakistani-Norwegians, reflect a milieu in the Norwegian immigrant culture.

¶14. (C) The Pakistani Student Association at the University of Oslo was the most publicly active organization in arranging demonstrations, even in the face of calls for calm by the Norwegian Islamic Association. This group had been a standard student group led by moderate student leaders. However, in the past year the old moderate leadership has been replaced with much more religiously conservative leadership. The struggle between moderate and radical voices in the Pakistani community was also reflected in the well-documented power struggles for the leadership of Oslo,s newest mosque, which resulted in a stabbing.

#### Problems on the Horizon

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¶15. (C) Many Pakistani-Norwegians, particular younger members of the society, have a perception that they will never be considered Norwegian by other Norwegians. During Farah Pandith,s visit to a Norwegian High School, the students expressed their feeling that they had no options ahead of them even though most were born in Norway and speak fluent Norwegian. (see refetel A) This is a common theme among immigrants but it may be particularly grating for Pakistani-Norwegians who have resided in Norway the longest.

¶16. (C) Bhatti,s planned terrorist actions, the violent and public reaction to the caricature controversy and leadership struggles demonstrate the danger of possible fanaticism in Norway. With low employment, low education, and the attraction of criminal activity, Pakistani youth appear to be a real risk group. Unrest in Pakistan also could play a role in radicalizing the Pakistani-Norwegian community. Other Muslim communities have, to one degree or another, brought their internal conflicts to Norway and shown a willingness to use violence (as seen in a 2006 Afghani street fight that led to multiple injuries and one death and recent conflicts between Turks and Kurds). It is easy to see how internal conflict in Pakistan could heighten tensions or radicalization of a different Muslim group could negatively impact Norwegian Pakistanis.

#### The Good News

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¶17. (C) Not all the news is grim. Norwegian-Pakistanis have significant local government representation, and did make it into the Parliament for the first time in the last election cycle. Pakistani youth have a number of roles models ) from self-made billionaire Tire King Tommy Sharif to media-hound lawyer Abid Raja as well as many doctors, lawyers, and teachers. The police, military, and intelligence services have slowly begun to hire Pakistani Norwegians, which will improve cultural understanding as well as improve communication. In the face of new, immigrants from even more exotic locations, the Norwegian-Pakistani population is often seen as established and comprehensible to some Norwegian commentators, who hear them speaking Norwegian (even though they may refer to it as Kebab Norwegian,) and see them participating in Norwegian cultural events and entertainment programs. This sense of establishment may encourage greater self-criticism and calls for integration in the Pakistani population as time passes. Books, OpEds, and participation in TV debate programs over the last few years by Pakistani-Norwegian journalists and politicians suggest that this process has slowly started.

#### The Government,s Approach

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¶18. (C) The government is aware of the need to integrate immigrants and despite some clumsy steps in the past, such as the hot debate over raising the legal marriage age, is trying to take steps to facilitate integration. The appointment of Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen as the Minister of Children and Equality may be a significant step as she is the first Norwegian Minister from an immigrant background (from Martinique). The overall government approach however has been tentative and slow. There is a lack of common agreement on terms of the immigration debate and whether immigrants should be encouraged to assimilate or not. Immigration and assimilation are also major partisan electoral issues. Few are willing to consider the possibility of radicalization in Norway and few police and PST assets are focused on this. Attention to this issue is slowly increasing but remains behind Danish and Swedish efforts.

¶19. (C) The government,s hand is being forced in part by

the rise of the Progress Party. The Party has a major platform focused on forcing integration. They consistently have the second largest poll figures, demonstrating that their message is resonating with a substantial number of Norwegians. In response, the government is speaking more about the challenges and debates are focusing more on the meaning of being Norwegian.

Comment: Can Social Changes Limit the Threat?  
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¶20. (C) Regardless of the government's efforts, real success in avoiding radicalization of the Pakistani-Norwegians will depend on Norwegian society evolving to give immigrants a real chance to be fully accepted and a decision by Pakistan Norwegians to focus on becoming Norwegian, as opposed to Pakistani. While both of these are happening, the pace is very slow. In the meantime, forces aiming to radicalize are working hard and may tap a responsive section of the Pakistani Norwegian community. Unfortunately, the conversion of only a very few to radicalization could have a huge impact in the country that continues to feel immune from terrorism. End Comment.

Challenge and Opportunity for the U.S.  
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¶21. (SBU) Post's outreach program has thus far included(details found in reftel B):

- held immigration and integration dinners.
  - meetings with the Norwegian Islamic Council.
  - visits to several mosques and meetings with moderate Imams.
  - meetings with a leading Norwegian Muslim professor at the University of Oslo.
  - meetings with the NGO Youth Against Violence which works with at-risk youth from the immigrant community.
  - DCM invited the debate editors for Norway's four leading dailies to discuss immigration, extremism, and anti-Semitism in Norway.
  - Ambassador hosted a large group of religious leaders for a Thanksgiving dinner. Attendees included Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish faith leaders.
  - Embassy meetings with leading experts on Islam and terrorism.
  - meetings with key diplomats from Muslim countries including Pakistan, Egypt, Bosnia, Turkey, and Morocco to learn more about their missions in Norway and citizens who reside in Norway.
  - a cricket match with Pakistani youth and embassy personnel.
  - the first ever Ambassador hosted Iftar dinner this fall for prominent moderate Muslims.
  - recruitment of nominees for the Young Leaders Summer Institute from the Muslim minority community.
  - visit by Farah Pandith to Oslo (see reftel A for details).
- 22.(SBU) In the coming year we are planning to repeat many of these events as well as:
- engage with the Islamic Council Youth wing to determine what kind of programming opportunities would be relevant and welcome.
  - include Muslim youth in our youth-oriented programs (science students to meet Buzz Aldrin, election programs, environmentally active students who are being invited to the lunch in honor of Nobel Peace Prize winner Al Gore.
  - seek opportunities for our two Roving Fulbright Scholars to speak at middle and high schools in Muslim communities.
  - recruit among the Norwegian Muslim community for our grants to students to participate in the European American Studies Conference which will take place in May here in Norway
  - continue city visits with local immigrant community leadership in as many city visits as possible. Although a large percentage of Norway's immigrant population resides in Oslo, there are many immigrants residing in smaller cities who were settled there by Norwegian authorities in an attempt to dilute the immigrant population in Oslo.
  - join with Embassy Stockholm and Copenhagen to bring over Eboo Patel or his trainer from IFYC to meet with immigrant youth groups in Norway to counter radicalism and gang culture by redirecting youth towards social activism.
  - work with Embassy London and the British government to bring successful American and British Pakistani entrepreneurs to Norway to meet with aspiring young business leaders to encourage creative ways for immigrant youth to enter the Norwegian job market.
- ¶23. (C) Action Request: Post believes Norway may be only a brief time away from serious problems with integration and radicalization which increased terror threats in other European countries. Proactive engagement by the USG now could help keep Norway from going down dangerous paths we have seen elsewhere. In addition to post plans above, we request the following from the Department to address these issues now.
- Provide funding for a summer leadership institute which will bring together young European Muslim leaders, to which each target country should be invited to send two participants.
  - Fund a Micro scholarship Program to bring English into the classrooms in low-performing schools in disadvantaged communities, provide contact between American teachers and Muslim minority youth, and teach about the United States in the high-density minority communities.
  - Create a youth-specific outreach tool, such as Radio Sawa or a web-based English language version of HI magazine.

--Create a special summer IV Program for European Young  
Muslim Leaders.  
JOHNSON